TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. STUDY RATIONALE

The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Juvenile Services Section requested the DCJS Evaluation Unit to conduct an assessment of training needs for juvenile detention facilities in Virginia. The intent of the assessment is to provide information to guide development of training strategies for these facilities. The specific nature of the assessment was guided by discussions with the Juvenile Services Section of DCJS. This report is submitted to the Juvenile Services Section in response to its request.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior research suggests that staff training is a cost-effective way to combine accountability-based principles and staff development to create appropriate settings for juvenile offenders (Roush and McMillen, 2000). While training for juvenile justice personnel in the United States has improved over the past decade, it continues to remain a high-ranking need for staff working in juvenile justice facilities. This report reviews a study specifically designed to assess the need for training in Virginia's juvenile detention facilities. The DCJS Evaluation Unit conducted a training needs assessment to determine the value of prior training, determine the subject areas where training was needed, develop consensus on the most important training topics, and identify current training obstacles. The assessment consisted of two primary tools: a training needs assessment survey and focus groups sessions with Virginia's detention center administrators.
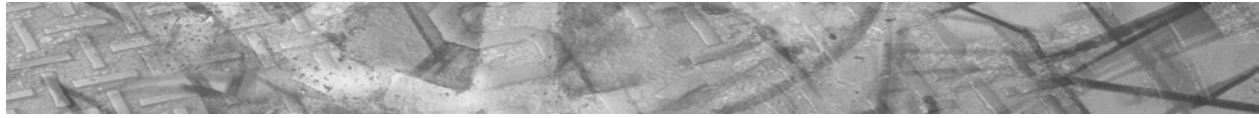
Training Needs Assessment Survey

Researchers developed a training needs assessment survey instrument to collect information from Virginia's detention centers. In general, the survey was designed to determine the functions most frequently served by juvenile detention staff, the content of prior training, and types of training that are desired in the future. The training needs assessment solicited participation from all operational juvenile detention facilities in the Commonwealth, as well as one which plans to be operational in April 2001. Detention staff, representing 20 detention facilities, completed a total of 568 surveys.

In general, the survey revealed that detention staff spend the majority of their time performing duties such as security, behavior management, and individual counseling. When asked about the minimum training requirement imposed by the Virginia Board of Juvenile Justice, more than half of respondents indicated that it is not difficult at all to meet the requirement. Of those remaining respondents who indicated that it was somewhat difficult or extremely difficult to meet the requirement, half specified limited staff coverage as a significant obstacle.

The survey also revealed that a majority of staff had previously received at least one type of Core Training and related training in general areas such as Security and Dealing with Delinquent Juveniles. Fewer staff had received training in more specialized counseling topics and programming techniques. In addition, the survey revealed that staff would find future training in certain Core Training (e.g., *Physical Restraint*) and Security (e.g., *De-escalating Conflict*) topics as most helpful.

One additional question, completed by detention administrators only, provided information on annual training budgets and in-service training. An analysis of responses revealed an average annual training budget of $7,154, and consequently an approximate annual training budget for each staff person of $132.

Focus Group Meetings

In addition to the assessment survey, four regional focus group meetings were held to help refine the interpretation of the survey findings. In general, detention administrators agreed that training topics focusing directly on juvenile/staff interactions, such as *Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders, Basic Skills in Dealing with Juveniles,* and *Anger Management/Conflict Resolution,* were important. Administrators additionally outlined the importance of training focusing on staff enhancement and facility operation, such as *Facility Safety/Security Procedures*.

Detention administrators also discussed obstacles they had experienced in pursuing training for staff. These obstacles included staff coverage, lack of variety in training opportunities, funding, lack of regional training, and limited access to DJJ training.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings outlined in the full report, DCJS suggests that the following recommendations be considered to improve training for detention staff.

- State, local, and private providers of training to detention centers should enhance regional training opportunities, thereby increasing availability and reducing travel/staff coverage costs.

- The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD), local detention facilities, and other relevant agencies should develop a plan to provide staff resources for statewide detention facility training support.

- The Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD) and the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) should work together to increase the utility and availability of DJJ as a training resource for detention facilities.

- Local detention facilities should prioritize the use of training funds to address (a) safety and security procedures, and (b) working with delinquents with psychological disorders, as well as other priority training topics as noted in this report.

- Local detention centers and the Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD) should explore strategies to capitalize on training that is available as a result of technological advances.

Additional explanatory information and support for each recommendation is contained in this report.
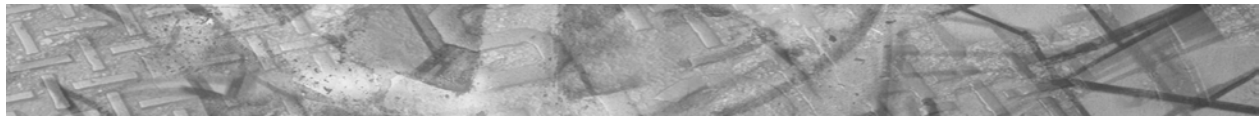
III. INTRODUCTION

Staff training has proven to be a cost-effective way to combine accountability-based principles and staff development to create appropriate settings for juvenile offenders (Roush and McMillen, 2000). Juvenile justice personnel with appropriate training can provide positive settings in which juvenile offenders can interact with adults and each other. While training for juvenile justice personnel in the United States has improved over the past decade, it continues to remain a high-ranking need for staff working in juvenile justice facilities (Roush and McMillen, 2000).

Training requirements for certain staff vary based on specific job responsibilities. Initial orientation and annual training are provided to all staff, including relief staff in accord with each position's job description. All full-time staff who provide direct services or supervision to residents receive at least 40 hours of training annually. As applicable to the individual's position, this training includes the Standards for the Interdepartmental Regulation of Residential Facilities for Children and the Board of Juvenile Justice standards dealing with suicide prevention, special medical needs of residents, health screenings at admission, and mechanical restraints. Therefore, staff training will vary because selected staff require only certain types of training.

To determine the need for training in Virginia's juvenile detention facilities, a training needs assessment was conducted by the DCJS Evaluation Unit. The assessment sought to determine the value of prior training, determine the subject areas where training was needed, develop consensus on the most important training topics, and identify current training obstacles. An accurate assessment of training needs in detention facilities throughout Virginia is an important step towards increasing the quality of services provided to youthful offenders. By identifying the training needs of facilities statewide, decision-makers will have the information necessary to consider the appropriate funding for such training efforts.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The training needs assessment incorporated three primary activities. First, the research team visited several detention facilities to receive assistance in developing meaningful questions about training needs. Second, a training needs assessment survey was developed by research staff. When survey development was completed, all staff from each detention facility were asked to complete the survey. Third, regional focus groups were held with the administrators of local detention facilities. Administrators included superintendents, directors, or managers of detention facilities. The focus group meetings were used to refine the interpretation of the survey findings and to provide additional context for the study.

The training needs assessment solicited participation from all 21 juvenile detention facilities currently in operation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, staff from the James River Juvenile Detention Center, which plans to be fully functional in April 2001, were included in the assessment. Table A lists the facilities that participated in the assessment.
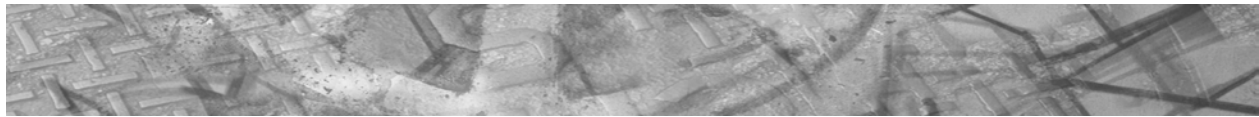
| TABLE A	
Juvenile Detention Facilities Included in the Needs Assessment	
Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Home Chesterfield, VA	**Newport News Juvenile Detention Center** Newport News, VA
Crater Juvenile Detention Home Chesterfield, VA	**Norfolk Juvenile Detention Center** Norfolk, VA
Culpeper Juvenile Detention Home Chesterfield, VA	**Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home** Alexandria, VA
Fairfax County Juvenile Detention Center Chesterfield, VA	**Northwestern Regional Juvenile Detention Center** Winchester, VA
Henrico County Juvenile Detention Home Chesterfield, VA	**Rappahannock Juvenile Detention Center** Stafford, VA
Highlands Juvenile Detention Center Bristol, VA	**Richmond Juvenile Detention Center** Richmond, VA*
James River Juvenile Detention Center Richmond, VA	**Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center** Roanoke, VA
Loudoun County Juvenile Detention Center Leesburg, VA	**Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Detention Home** Staunton, VA
Lynchburg Regional Juvenile Detention Center Lynchburg, VA	**Tidewater Detention Home** Chesapeake, VA
Merrimac Center Williamsburg, VA	**W.W. Moore Jr. Detention Home** Danville, VA
New River Valley Juvenile Detention Home Christiansburg, VA	

Note: Surveys for the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center were not included in the survey analysis due to late receipt; however, they did participate in a focus group meeting. The Prince William Detention Home chose not to participate in the study.

Initial Detention Facility Site Visits

Research staff visited detention facilities in Fairfax, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Richmond, Roanoke, Staunton, and Williamsburg to gain familiarity with the facility organizations, their staff, and program participants. Site visits were conducted with the cooperation of facility administrators. Several topics were reviewed, including detention facility goals, objectives, and policies; the organizational structure of the detention facility; and detailed information regarding detention staff and the juveniles they serve. The results of these interviews were used to guide the development of a Training Needs Assessment Survey.

Training Needs Assessment Survey

The primary tool used by research staff to assess training needs was the Training Needs Assessment Survey instrument. To guide the development and administration of this instrument, a brief Detention Home Staffing Survey (see Appendix A) was conducted which asked each facility administrator to provide a listing of all facility positions, including relief/part-time staff positions. This initial survey provided the research staff with the total number of staff currently employed by each juvenile detention facility in the state and the job titles for each position. This information was further used to finalize the distribution plan for the Training Needs Assessment Survey.
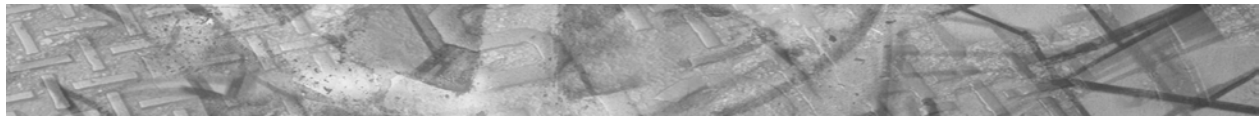
Following the site visits and staffing survey, a Training Needs Assessment Survey (see Appendix B) instrument was developed by research staff and administered to all detention staff currently employed at the 22 detention facilities. The survey contained primarily closed-ended questions, including a list of 47 specific training needs topics. In general, questions attempted to determine the type of training staff had previously received, the helpfulness of the training received, the providers of previous training, and the potential helpfulness of future training. In addition, the survey asked specific questions of the facility administrators regarding individual training budgets and staff training provided during the past year.

All staff, including administrators, security staff, treatment staff, relief staff and support/clerical staff, were asked to complete the survey. Confidentiality was maintained by providing respondents with individual envelopes in which to place their completed surveys. Administrators were then asked to collect the sealed envelopes and return them to the research team.

Regional Focus Groups

In addition, four regional focus group meetings were used to refine the interpretation of the findings from the Training Needs Assessment Survey. These meetings were held in four Virginia locations and were regionally located to enhance participation. Each focus group was a full-day meeting with intensive discussions about training issues and needs. Research staff presented preliminary results from the Training Needs Assessment Survey to guide the meetings. The main goal of the focus groups was to gain consensus among detention facilities regarding the types of training which were most important to the staff of their facilities.

V. RESULTS

The results of this study are divided into two sections: (1) results from the Training Needs Assessment Survey and (2) a summary of findings from the four regional focus group meetings.

Results from the Training Needs Assessment Survey

Detention staff, representing 20 detention facilities, completed a total of 568 surveys. A total of 1,479 surveys was mailed to the 22 detention facilities, resulting in a response rate of 38%. It should be noted that part-time and relief staff were included in the number of surveys sent to the facilities. This may have had an impact on the return rate since those staff may not have had the opportunity to respond in a timely fashion to the survey. Responses were reviewed to summarize findings across all survey participants. In addition, responses were also reviewed by respondent type, specifically administration, clerical/support, and security/treatment. Table B shows the breakdown of the responses by respondent type.

TABLE B		
Breakdown of Respondents by Respondent Type (n=568)		
Respondent Type	*Num.*	*%*
Security/Treatment	483	85%
Administration	51	9%
Clerical/Support	25	4%
Unspecified	9	2%
Total	*568*	*100%*

Services and Functions Provided

Respondents were asked to indicate the services and functions they are expected to provide within each facility. As shown in Table C, staff are most frequently expected to provide security, behavior management, individual counseling, and group counseling of juveniles. Conversely, staff are least likely to be expected to provide maintenance/food service, intake, and training.

TABLE C		
Services/Functions Staff are Most Frequently Expected to Provide (n=558)		
Services/functions	*Num.*	*%*
Security	469	84%
Behavior Management	427	77%
Individual Counseling	347	62%
Group Counseling- Juveniles	285	51%
Medical	260	47%
Staff Supervision	240	44%
Therapeutic Recreational Activities	220	39%
Transportation	219	39%
Administrative Support	150	28%
Program Administration	129	24%
Case Management	96	17%
Referrals	73	13%
Group Counseling- Parents	29	5%
Maintenance/Food Service*	22	4%*
Intake*	15	3%*
Training*	7	1%*

Note: These three services/functions were added to the existing response categories as a result of open-ended answers by respondents. An additional small percentage of respondents (3%) indicated they provide other miscellaneous services/functions.

Staff were also asked to indicate the three services/functions that they spend the majority of their time performing. Researchers were interested in ascertaining if there were similarities in the services/functions staff are expected to provide versus those they actually spend the majority of their time performing. Similar to the results from the previous question, staff spend the majority of their time performing the following three services and functions: security, behavior management, and individual counseling.

In addition, staff were further categorized into one of three respondent types (Administration, Clerical/Support, Security/Treatment). Not surprisingly, service/function types were consistent with the respondent categories for both services/functions staff are most frequently expected to provide and the top three services/functions staff spend the majority of their time performing. Administrative personnel are more likely to provide program administration and staff supervision than other respondent types. Clerical/Support personnel are more likely to provide functions such as administrative support. Security/treatment personnel are more likely than other respondent types to provide services including security, behavior management, and individual counseling.

An additional question on the survey was intended to identify staff who worked primarily with Pre-Dispositional juveniles versus those who worked primarily with Post-Dispositional juveniles. While we planned to examine any training needs differences between these two groups, we were unable to do so in a meaningful way because over 40% of respondents indicated that they work with both groups routinely.
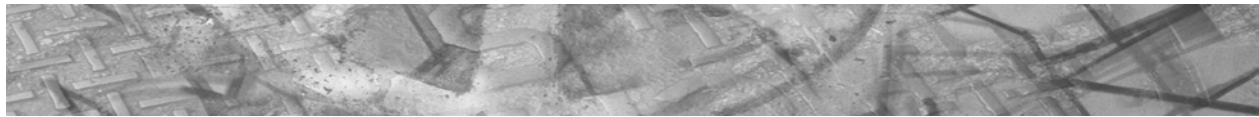
Annual Training Requirement

Respondents were asked to indicate how difficult it is to meet the 40-hour minimum training requirement established by Virginia's Board of Juvenile Justice. More than half (55%) of the 534 respondents indicated that it is "Not Difficult At All" to meet the 40-hour minimum training requirement. However, 240 respondents indicated that it is "Somewhat Difficult" (37%) or "Extremely Difficult" (8%) to meet the 40-hour minimum training requirement. These respondents were asked to specify the obstacles that contributed most to this difficulty. (Table D shows a complete list of obstacles for this question.) Half of the respondents specified "Limited Staff Coverage" as a significant obstacle. Other obstacles noted by at least one-quarter of respondents include "Lack of Variety in Training Opportunities" and "Limited Funding." The least cited obstacle was "Lack of Access to Appropriate Training Providers."

TABLE D		
Obstacles to Meeting the 40-hour Minimum Training Requirement (n=240)		
Level of Difficulty	*Num.*	*%*
Limited Staff Coverage	117	50%
Lack of Variety in Training Opportunities	86	37%
Limited Funding	66	28%
Lack of Organized Training Opportunities	65	28%
Lack of Regional Training	60	26%
Lack of Access to Appropriate Training Providers	44	19%

Prior Training Received

Table E presents 47 types of training previously received by respondents in the assessment sample. The 47 training topics have been categorized into seven categories, including Core Training, Security, Programming Techniques, Counseling-Special Topics, Dealing with Delinquent Juveniles, Staff and Administration, and General Staff Development. At least 70% of staff had previously received at least one type of Core Training (which generally includes *First Aid/CPR, Physical Restraint, Emergency Procedures*, etc.) and related training in general areas such as *Facility Safety/Security Procedures, De-escalating Conflict, Search Procedures, Crisis Training/Intervention,* and *Basic Skills in Dealing with Juveniles*. (It is important to note that not all staff are required to receive training in each topic listed under the Core Training category; therefore, it is not unusual that percentages do not equal 100 for these topics.) Fewer staff had received training in more specialized topics such as *Art Activities, Counseling Female Offenders, Interacting with Parents*, and *Gender Differences*. In general, survey results indicated that staff were less likely to receive training in specialized topics and more likely to receive training in more general areas.

Helpfulness of Prior Training Received

Staff were also asked to indicate the helpfulness of each previous training topic on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not Helpful" and 5 being "Extremely Helpful". Table E also shows the average helpfulness rating for each of the 47 training topics. The mean response ranged from a low of 3.4 for *Art Activities* to a high of 4.3 for *First Aid/CPR* and *Physical Restraint*. Other high-ranking topics included *Emergency Procedures, Facility Safety/Security Procedures,* and *De-escalating Conflict*.
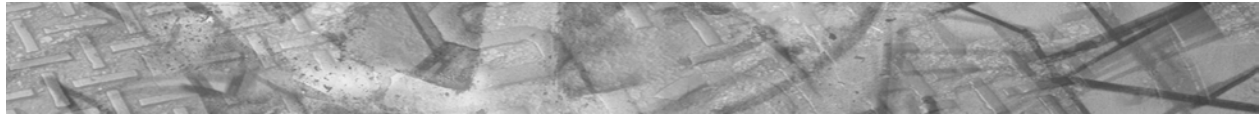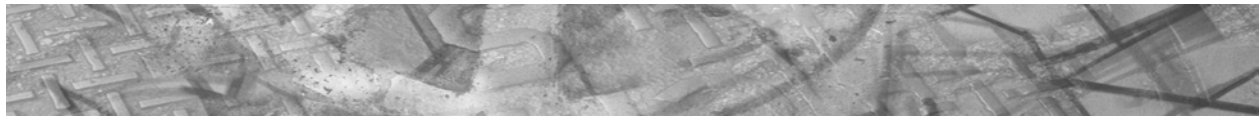
	TABLE E	
	Prior Training Received	
Training Type	**Yes***	**Helpfulness Rating** 1= "Not Helpful" 5= "Extremely Helpful"
Core Training:		
First Aid/CPR	93%	4.3
Physical Restraint	92%	4.3
Emergency Procedures	88%	4.2
Mechanical Restraints	75%	4.0
Suicide Prevention	74%	4.1
Special Medical Needs of Residents	62%	4.0
Health Screenings at Admissions	58%	4.0
Security:		
Facility Safety/Security Procedures	87%	4.2
De-escalating Conflict	82%	4.2
Search Procedures	81%	4.2
Crisis Training/Intervention	77%	4.2
Radio/Oral Communication	64%	4.0
Cell Extraction Techniques	41%	4.0
Riot (Major Disturbance) Training	38%	4.0
Programming Techniques:		
Team Building	55%	3.8
Group Facilitation	46%	3.9
Recreational Activities	37%	3.6
Art Activities	11%	3.4
Counseling- Special Topics:		
Anger Management/Conflict Resolution	64%	4.0
Stress Management	57%	3.9
Substance Abuse	50%	4.0
Counseling the Sexual Offender	24%	4.0
Counseling Female Offenders	20%	3.9
Dealing with Delinquent Juveniles:		
Basic Skills in Dealing with Juveniles	71%	4.0
Medication Aid	68%	4.1
Behavior Modification/Management	68%	4.0
Rights and Responsibilities of Juveniles	63%	3.9
How to Set Limits with Juveniles	58%	4.1
Dealing with Gang Influences	45%	3.9
Cultural Competency/Diversity	42%	3.9
Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders	39%	4.1
Medication Side Effects	38%	4.1
Patterns of Adolescent Development	35%	3.9
Understanding Family Dynamics	33%	3.9
Working with Juveniles with Developmental Disorders	31%	4.1
Gender Differences	28%	3.9
Interacting with Parents	21%	4.0
Staff and Administration:		
Confidentiality Issues	67%	4.0
Legal/Liability Issues	54%	4.1
Relationship Building Between Staff and Residents	53%	4.0
Transportation	50%	3.9
Ethics/Boundary Issues	38%	3.9
Development of Treatment Plans	26%	3.9
General Staff Development:		
Writing Skills/Record Keeping	56%	4.1
Computer Skills	56%	3.9
Management/Supervisory Skills	47%	4.2
Recruiting/Screening Applicants	21%	4.1

* Percentages are based on valid responses. Missing responses ranged from 1% to 8%.

Providers of Training

Respondents who received prior training in a topic area also indicated who provided that training. Because a respondent could have received training on a topic from more than one provider, this question could have multiple responses. The type of provider varied by training topic. Most training was provided to staff at the detention facility. Averaging across all topic areas, 56% of respondents indicated the training provider was In-House, followed by DJJ (17%), Local Government (7%), and Conference/Workshop (6%). (Twenty-three percent of respondents said they received training from other miscellaneous providers.)

Helpfulness of Future Training

Respondents were asked to indicate how helpful it would be to receive specific types of training in the future, again using the same list of 47 training topics. Respondents rated helpfulness using the same 5-point scale as described earlier. These findings are presented in Table F. Future training in *Physical Restraint, Emergency Procedures, De-escalating Conflict,* and *Crisis Training/Intervention* were rated highest, at 4.6, among the 47 training topics. In contrast, future training in *Art Activities, Recreational Activities, Interacting with Parents,* and *Transportation* were rated lowest.

Questions for Detention Administrators Only

The final page of the Training Needs Assessment Survey contained two questions for detention administrators only. First, administrators were asked to provide information regarding their annual training budgets. Budget information was provided by fourteen of the 20 responding localities. As indicated by the results of the earlier staffing survey, staff numbers for these facilities ranged from a low of 6 staff to a high of 98 staff, averaging 54 employees. Annual training budgets averaged $7,154, with budgets ranging from a low of $600 to a high of $28,875. An approximate annual training budget for each staff person is around $132. Please note that training budgets vary from facility to facility due to the number of staff employed. In addition, some training budgets include travel expenses while others do not.

The survey also asked administrators to list any in-service training that was provided to staff within the past year. Approximately half of the training provided to staff by the facilities covered Core Training, including *First Aid/CPR, Physical Restraint, Emergency Procedures,* and *Suicide Prevention*. All but one of the 14 facilities that responded to this question provided at least one training from the Core Training category. *Medication Aid* training was also frequently provided to staff within the last year.
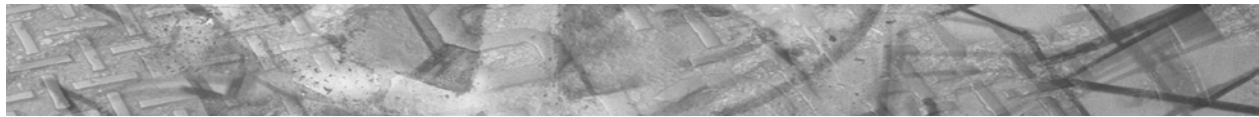
TABLE F	
Ratings of Helpfulness for Future Training	
Training Type	**Helpfulness Rating** 1= "Not Helpful" 5= "Extremely Helpful"
Core Training:	
First Aid/CPR	4.5
Physical Restraint	4.6
Emergency Procedures	4.6
Suicide Prevention	4.5
Special Medical Needs of Residents	4.4
Health Screenings at Admissions	4.3
Mechanical Restraints	4.5
Security:	
De-escalating Conflict	4.6
Crisis Training/Intervention	4.6
Cell Extraction Techniques	4.4
Riot (Major Disturbance) Training	4.5
Facility Safety/Security Procedures	4.5
Search Procedures	4.4
Radio/Oral Communication	4.1
Programming Techniques:	
Art Activities	3.7
Recreational Activities	4.0
Team Building	4.2
Group Facilitation	4.2
Counseling- Special Topics:	
Substance Abuse	4.3
Anger Management/Conflict Resolution	4.5
Stress Management	4.4
Counseling the Sexual Offender	4.3
Counseling Female Offenders	4.3
Dealing with Delinquent Juveniles:	
Medication Aid	4.3
Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders	4.5
Working with Juveniles with Developmental Disorders	4.5
Cultural Competency/Diversity	4.2
Dealing with Gang Influences	4.3
Medication Side Effects	4.2
How to Set Limits with Juveniles	4.4
Behavior Modification/Management	4.4
Patterns of Adolescent Development	4.2
Gender Differences	4.1
Interacting with Parents	4.0
Rights and Responsibilities of Juveniles	4.2
Basic Skills in Dealing with Juveniles	4.3
Understanding Family Dynamics	4.1
Staff and Administration:	
Transportation	4.0
Legal/Liability Issues	4.3
Ethics/Boundary Issues	4.2
Development of Treatment Plans	4.2
Confidentiality Issues	4.2
Relationship Building Between Staff and Residents	4.3
General Staff Development:	
Computer Skills	4.4
Management/Supervisory Skills	4.4
Recruiting/Screening Applicants	4.4
Writing Skills/Record Keeping	4.3

* Based on valid responses. Missing responses range from 6% to 14% by training topic.
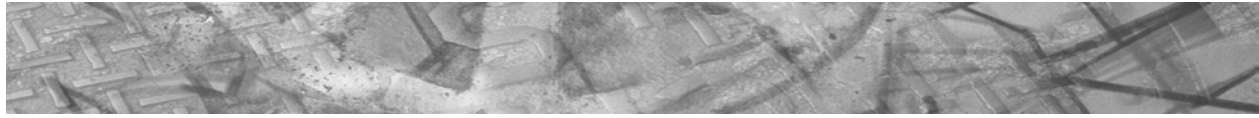
Results from Focus Group Meetings

Four regional focus group meetings were held in Fairfax, Newport News, Richmond, and Roanoke to help refine the interpretation of the survey findings and to provide additional context for the study. All administrators were invited to participate. Table G lists the facilities with staff that participated in each focus group meeting.

| TABLE G	
Focus Group Participants	
Fairfax Meeting	Fairfax County Juvenile Detention Center Loudoun County Juvenile Detention Center Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home Northwestern Regional Juvenile Detention Center
Newport News Meeting	Merrimac Center Newport News Juvenile Detention Center Norfolk Juvenile Detention Center Tidewater Detention Home
Richmond Meeting	Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Home Crater Juvenile Detention Home Henrico Juvenile Detention Home James River Juvenile Detention Center Richmond Juvenile Detention Center
Roanoke Meeting	Highlands Juvenile Detention Center Lynchburg Regional Juvenile Detention Center New River Valley Juvenile Detention Home Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center

Research staff reviewed the statewide survey findings as a basis for discussion during the focus group meetings. Participants were then asked to rate how the survey findings related to their individual facilities on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being a poor fit and 10 being an outstanding fit. Participants consistently stated that the findings represented a pretty good fit with what was occurring in each facility, ranking the findings around 7 or 8 in each focus group meeting.

Training Providers

Participants were asked to provide additional information about training providers. Specifically, respondents were asked to identify agencies and departments that were classified in the survey as "other" providers. These discussions revealed that other providers include the federal government, the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management, regional criminal justice academies, the Internet, mental health agencies, Community Services Boards, social service agencies, the American Correctional Association, the American Red Cross, private vendors, colleges/universities, and insurance companies.

Training Needs by Staff Type

During the focus group meetings, participants were provided with the same list of training topics used in the survey instrument, but were also given the opportunity to generate additional important topics if they wished. Some of these additional topics included *Overview of the Juvenile Justice System, Alternatives to Physical Restraint, Interpersonal/Motivational Training,* and *Counseling Juveniles with Traumatic Personal Experiences*.
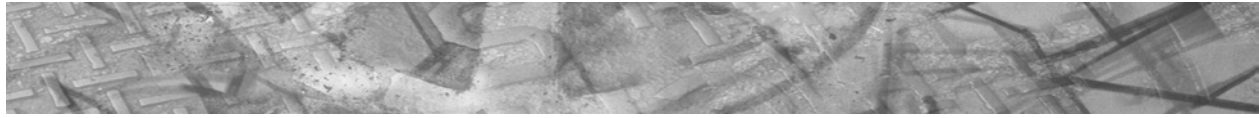
Participants were then asked to create job description categories for personnel employed at each facility. The goal of this exercise was to create a set of staff "types" and establish training priorities for each type. For the most part, the descriptions included the following categories: Administration, Security, Treatment, and Support. Administrators were then asked to review each of the 47 training topics, along with the additional training topics generated at the meeting, and indicate the staff types that were most in need of each training topic.

When reviewed very generally, these findings indicated that training needs for administrative personnel varied from facility to facility based on the position responsibilities commonly assigned by each facility. Some facilities indicated that administrative personnel need training in all broad categories while other facilities suggested that administrative personnel may not require training in Programming Techniques and Counseling-Special Topics. Training needs for treatment and security staff consistently included all categories listed, including the additional topics generated by focus group participants. In addition, training needs for support staff (ie. clerical, food service, and building maintenance) varied somewhat from facility to facility. Overall, support staff were less likely than other staff types to need training in the Dealing with Delinquent Juveniles category. Support staff were more likely to require Core Training and training in the Staff and Administration and General Staff Development categories. In many cases, facilities indicated support staff would also need training in the additional topics generated by focus group participants.

Most Desired Training Topics

The focus group meetings were also designed to help participants gain consensus on the most important training topics identified in the survey. Utilizing the combined list of training topics as discussed above, each focus group was asked to reach a consensus on the three training topics that would be most useful. This list of training topics, summarized across all four groups, is shown in Table H.

TABLE H
Most Desired Training Topics from Focus Groups
Anger Management/Conflict Resolution
Basic Skills in Dealing with Juveniles
Facility Safety/Security Procedures*
Legal/Liability Issues
Medication Aid
Patterns of Adolescent Development
Team Building
Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders*

Note: The training topics noted with an asterisk were cited by three of the four focus group sessions.

In general, detention administrators agreed that training topics focusing directly on juvenile/staff interactions, such as *Basic Skills in Dealing with Juveniles, Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders*, and *Anger Management/Conflict Resolution* were important. Administrators also outlined the importance of training focusing on staff enhancement and facility operation such as *Facility Safety/Security Procedures*. Across all focus groups, clearly the majority of administrators placed the greatest focus on *Facility Safety/Security Procedures* and *Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders*.
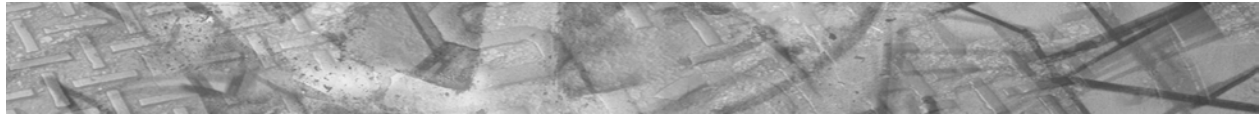
Other General Discussion

In addition to the directed questions outlined above, participants in the focus group meetings were given the opportunity to discuss any issues and concerns regarding training issues. Many expressed a desire for increased coordination, support, and resources for detention facilities from state agencies. Specifically, participants discussed the need for a staff person on the state level who could be available to assist detention facilities in the coordination of training opportunities.

Participants also discussed the need for regional training. They stated that much of the training made available for detention staff by DJJ is usually located in Richmond. It becomes difficult for many facilities to send their staff to these trainings. In addition, it can be too expensive to provide relief coverage for staff who are away for training.

Focus group participants identified the expanded use of technology as a method to increase training efforts. Discussion focused on the use of existing teleconference equipment for training, the use of Internet training, and computer-based training. Participants contended that these training avenues would enhance opportunities for self-guided instruction and reduce travel, lodging, and staff coverage expenses.

Current Training Obstacles

During focus group meetings, participants also discussed obstacles they had experienced in pursuing training for staff. These discussions, along with responses from the survey question regarding obstacles to meeting the 40-hour minimum annual training requirement, resulted in the following list of training obstacles.

1. Participants indicated that training is hindered by difficulties in obtaining additional personnel to provide coverage for staff who are attending training. Funding for this coverage was also a concern.

2. Participants expressed frustration with the lack of variety in training opportunities that focus on detention needs. Most training opportunities for detention staff cover a small number of general topics. Many administrators expressed a need for more detention-specific training opportunities to be made available to their staff.

3. Funding for training was a concern for many participants. Several focus group participants reiterated this concern. In addition, survey findings indicated that an approximate annual training budget for each staff person is around $132. Actual costs for some staff would vary because only selected staff require certain types of training. For instance, all full-time staff who provide direct services or supervision to residents are required to receive trainings such as *Suicide Prevention* and *Mechanical Restraints*. In contrast, support staff who do not provide direct services or supervision to residents would not be required to receive these trainings.

4. Administrators expressed strong support for staff training that is conducted on a regional basis. In addition, many administrators commented that they would like to have training in an academy setting. The amount of time and expense associated with travel, particularly overnight travel, seems to be a primary concern that has reduced opportunities to obtain training. Increased time away from the facility likewise increases the need and expense for relief staff.

5. Administrators contend that detention facilities have a difficult time accessing DJJ training on a regular basis. Administrators believe detention staff are no longer a training priority for DJJ and, therefore, are unable to participate in training unless space becomes available due to last-minute cancellations.
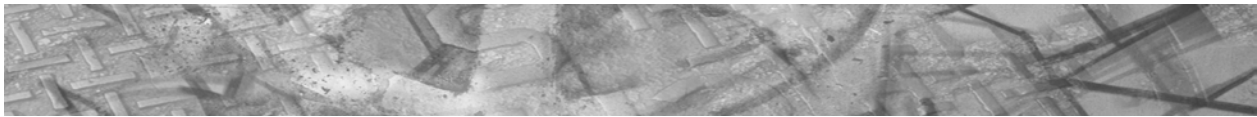
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The DCJS Research Center completed a training needs assessment for juvenile detention facilities at the request of the DCJS Juvenile Services Section. The assessment used two specific tools, an assessment survey and focus group meetings, to determine the subject areas where training was needed, to develop consensus on the most important training topics, and to identify current training obstacles. Respondents to the survey included 568 staff from 20 juvenile detention centers across the state. Four regional focus groups were also held for administrators to provide additional input.

Survey findings indicated detention staff are most frequently expected to provide services/functions that include security, behavior management, individual counseling, and group counseling for juveniles. In addition, researchers sought to determine if there were similarities in the services/functions staff are expected to provide, versus those they actually spend the majority of their time performing. Survey findings indicate that staff do indeed spend the majority of their time performing the same activities: security, behavior management, and individual counseling.

Survey findings also indicated that important training topics for detention staff were those focusing directly on staff/juvenile interactions and facility operation, such as *De-escalating Conflict, Physical Restraint, Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders*, and *Facility Safety/Security Procedures*. Staff further indicated that the majority of training is provided by in-house training sources, with some additional training provided by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice; relatively less training is provided by local government and conferences/workshops. Detention center administrators who participated in focus group meetings also highlighted the need for staff training directly related to staff/juvenile interactions, but additionally identified the need for training that focuses on staff enhancement and facility operations. While respondents to the survey and participants in the focus groups identified many training topics as important, a recurring theme throughout both efforts was the need for training in *Working with Delinquents with Psychological Disorders* and *Security and Safety Procedures*.

Survey results further indicated almost half of detention center staff have experienced obstacles in accomplishing the 40-hour minimum training requirement established by the Virginia Board of Juvenile Justice. Such obstacles, including limited staff coverage and funding, lack of variety in training opportunities, and lack of organized training opportunities, were identified by focus group participants.

Based on the findings outlined in this report, DCJS suggests that the following recommendations be considered to improve training for detention staff.

1. *State, local, and private providers of training to detention centers should enhance regional training opportunities, thereby increasing availability and reducing travel/staff coverage costs.*

    The Training Committee of the Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD) has recently proposed to organize local detention centers into three training regions. According to this plan, each detention facility would develop training programs for its region and offer such training on a planned rotational basis. This would include selecting appropriate trainers, whether in-house or external, and organizing training events.
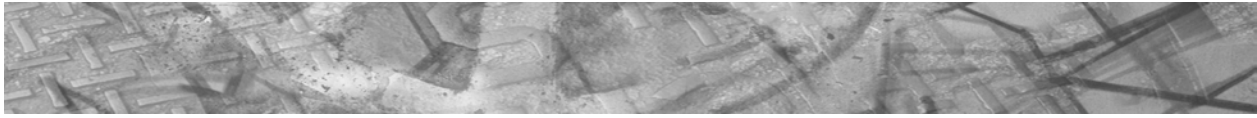
While this effort may improve the number of regional training opportunities, the availability of training by external providers continues to be limited. Many trainings, particularly those provided by DJJ, are centrally located in Richmond. However, administrators strongly contend that regional trainings would be much more accessible and cost effective. When trainings are not regionally located, the identification and funding of relief staff can become prohibitive. Inconvenient trainings may also reduce the likelihood that staff will be able to attend by increasing the travel/lodging costs of training. Respondents were particularly concerned that overnight travel has reduced opportunities for training. Some administrators were interested in pursuing the use of training academies to address this problem.

2. *The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD), local detention facilities, and other relevant agencies should develop a plan to provide staff resources for statewide detention facility training support.*

The VCJD Training Committee's proposal to pursue training regions, if approved, should eliminate some existing issues with training coordination. However, administrators continue to be concerned about the lack of statewide staff resources for juvenile detention facility training. Specifically, superintendents reported that available trainings often lack variety, and that long-term staff frequently find training opportunities available in classes they have previously attended. In addition, training opportunities are usually treated as peripheral activities and frequently are given a low priority compared with the day-to-day management tasks and crises that consume facility administrators. It is consequently difficult to find time to search for relevant training opportunities. Possible strategies to overcome these difficulties may include hiring a part-time employee or utilizing existing personnel to act as a statewide support person for staff training. This person would be responsible for identifying and developing detention-specific training programs, and for ensuring the availability of well-rounded training opportunities for senior staff.

3. *The Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD) and the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) should work together to increase the utility and availability of DJJ as a training resource for detention facilities.*

Survey findings suggest that DJJ is infrequently used to train detention facility staff. Such training was readily available in the past, and administrators/staff found classes to be very valuable, as well as cost-effective. Focus group participants indicated that juvenile detention facilities now have a difficult time accessing DJJ training resources, except on a last-minute/cancellation basis. In addition, the training that DJJ currently provides is strongly focused on the juvenile corrections setting. Very little specific training is available to address the unique needs of juvenile detention facilities, which predominately house juveniles on a short-term basis and do not generally emphasize treatment.
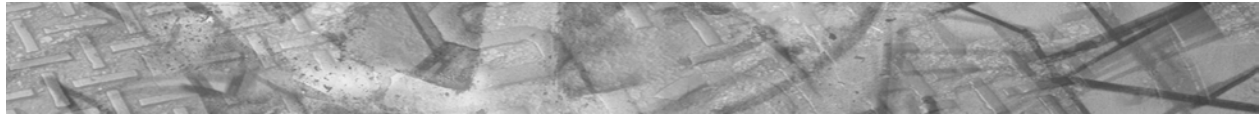
4. *Local detention facilities should prioritize the use of training funds to address (a) safety and security procedures, and (b) working with delinquents with psychological disorders, as well as other priority training topics as noted in this report.*

Administrators indicated that lack of funding to increase training capacity is a concern. Based on survey findings, an approximate training budget for each staff person is around $132. This includes the funds required to provide the 40 hours of minimum training required by the Virginia Board of Juvenile Justice for direct care staff and may also include travel costs. In light of these small training budgets, it is important to prioritize the most important training activities. Survey findings and focus group activities were used to prioritize the types of trainings most desired by detention staff. Taken together, the assessment methods identified two predominant training issues: (a) safety and security procedures and (b) working with delinquents with psychological disorders. A review of the other important training needs is shown on pages 10 and 11.
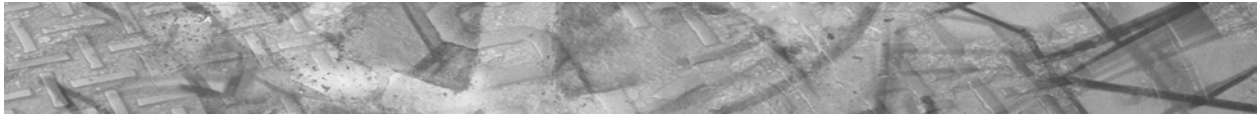
5. ***Local detention centers and the Virginia Council on Juvenile Detention (VCJD) should explore strategies to capitalize on training that is available as a result of technological advances.***

Focus group participants also identified the need for the expanded use of technology to increase training efforts. Suggestions included trainings held by teleconferencing and online/computer-based training. Many facilities currently have the hardware available to use these types of training. Such training modalities would enhance opportunities for self-guided instruction in applicable topic areas, and perhaps decrease the restrictive travel, lodging, and staff coverage costs that are often necessary to obtain effective training.

VII. REFERENCES

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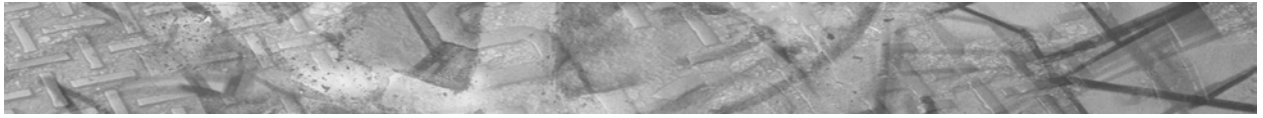
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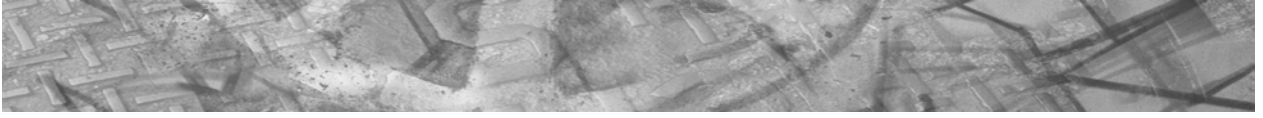
APPENDIX A

Detention Home Staffing Survey

APPENDIX B

Detention Training Needs Assessment Survey